Chapter 1 — Where the Air Drowns

Rain. Endless, suffocating rain.

The sky hung heavy over Ravenmoor, a forgotten coastal town buried beneath decades of secrets. Most of the houses were abandoned, their windows cracked and eyes hollow, staring at the ocean like witnesses who had seen too much.

Elias Ward, 17, stood alone on the rusted pier, staring at the black waves. People said the sea here “ate memories.” Boats sank without storms. People disappeared without splashes. And sometimes… the water whispered names.

His name.

> “Elias…”

He froze. It came from below the surface, a soft drowning voice dragging each syllable.

Then he saw it — a pale hand breaking through the surface before vanishing instantly.

Chapter 2 — The Missing Body

Thirty-two years ago, on September 17, 1983, a boy named Lucas Hale drowned here. He was twelve. Witnesses claimed they saw him slip beneath the waves during a storm… but when divers searched for days, they found no body.

Since then, Ravenmoor changed. People stopped swimming. Children whispered about the “Drowned One.” And every year, on the same night, someone went missing.

Elias had read about it. But there was something else — something not in the papers.

Lucas's last diary entry, recovered and locked away by his family, had only four words scrawled violently across the page:

"I OPENED THE DOOR."

No one ever explained what that meant.

Chapter 3 — The House That Breathes

Elias returned home late that night, his clothes soaked. The house groaned under the weight of the storm, every creak like something shifting inside the walls.

He tossed his bag onto the floor and froze.

There were wet footprints leading from the door to his bedroom. Bare, small… as if made by a child.

But Elias lived alone.

Inside his room, the air was damp. His mirror was fogged despite the cold. And carved faintly into the glass, invisible unless the lightning struck just right, were three words:

“HE IS AWAKE.”

Chapter 4 — The Water Knows

At school, whispers followed him. Students avoided Elias, their eyes darting to the dripping stains on his bag. One kid finally asked:

> “Did you… hear him too?”

Elias froze. “Who?”

The boy leaned closer, his voice trembling.

> “The one who drowned.”

That night, Elias searched everything he could find about Lucas. Old forums. Scanned newspapers. And then… a private archive on the dark web.

A post from 2001, written by someone calling themselves H3r3R:

> *“Lucas didn’t drown. He opened something beneath the city. The flood wasn’t an accident.

They lied about the body. The ocean took him, but not like you think.”*

Before Elias could read further, the entire forum vanished. The page replaced with a single line of text:

“We’re watching you.”

Chapter 5 — The Dream Below

That night, Elias dreamed of standing underwater. He couldn’t breathe, yet he didn’t die. Shapes floated in the black, moving too slowly, like broken marionettes.

One of them turned.

A pale boy. Empty eyes. Open mouth. Hair drifting upward like weeds.

Lucas.

He reached out and whispered, without sound:

> “Don’t wake the city.”

When Elias gasped awake, his bed was soaked. Saltwater pooled beneath his pillow. And on the wall above him, scratched deep into the paint, were four letters:

L • C • A • U

The letters were scrambled… but Elias didn’t notice.

Chapter 6 — The Pattern of Disappearances

Elias went to the archives. Records showed 39 disappearances since 1983. No patterns, no clues. But then he saw it — every missing person was last seen near water: docks, wells, bathrooms, flooded basements.

The last victim? Sarah Whitlock, 16. Her bedroom wall was covered in drawings of a city beneath the ocean.

In her journal, she'd written:

> "The drowned are building something. And when they finish, the surface dies."

The drawings matched Elias's dreams exactly.

Chapter 7 — The Man in the Raincoat

One night, Elias saw him — a tall figure in a black raincoat standing at the edge of the pier, unmoving, staring at the water.

Elias called out. No response.

Lightning struck. For a split second, he saw the figure’s face reflected in the water.

It was his own.

When the light faded, the pier was empty.

Chapter 8 — The Whisper Code

That night, Elias played a voicemail from an unknown number. The audio was distorted, drowned in static, but he caught fragments:

> “...stop digging… they never buried him… the door… wasn’t meant… for us.”

Then a soft child’s laugh. Then silence.